

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

March 17, 2015

Related to Item #21

The State of California has approximately 1.8 million veterans, more than any state in the nation. Comparatively, the County of Los Angeles with 325,000 veterans, has the highest concentration of any county in the state. The California State Library (CSL), understanding the serious need to serve this population, contacted the County of Los Angeles Public Library to discuss implementation of a Veteran's Connect Resource Center Program Pilot.

While some veterans are successful in acquiring access to information, a large percentage of the County's veteran population are still unaware of the benefits available to them. Libraries are trusted and friendly community-based agencies that foster a welcoming environment for obtaining information. The Veteran's Resource Center connects veterans in the community with information about state and federal education, employment, house, health, disability and other benefits that may be available to them and their families. The Veteran's Resource Center is staffed by trained volunteers, many of whom are veterans themselves or who have experience assisting veterans. Veterans

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can get one-on-one help from a volunteer or browse the collection of library books and other material selected especially for veterans. The Library partners with local veteran organizations, the LA County Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs, and with Cal Vet to provide accurate information about benefits.

The CSL grant provides funding to pilot the Veteran's Resource Center at one library in the County system. The Lancaster Library was selected as a pilot due to its high concentration of veterans in need of services. There are 6,953 homeless veterans in the Lancaster area and about 40% of these veterans are homeless without access to resource information and services. Expanding this program to other community libraries in the County creates an opportunity to reach and serve more veterans and their families and to dramatically improve their lives.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS direct the Los Angeles County Librarian to:

1. Evaluate the success of the Lancaster pilot to determine the feasibility of replicating sustainable Veteran's Resource Center models in other County libraries; and
2. Report back in writing its findings to the Board of Supervisors 6 months after the start of the Veteran's Connect program pilot.